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AUTHOR Gustafson, Richard A.; Owens, Thomas
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ABSTRACT

Children's perceptions of themselves and of their teachers' feelings toward them were correlated in this study with teacher perceptions of the children's self-concepts and with school achievement in an effort to document the relationships among these factors in terms of ethnic group membership (Mexican American and non-Mexican American). Instruments measuring self-concept, cognitive ability, and achievement were administered to 552 students in grades 3 and 6 in 5 urban California schools having more than 50% concentrations of Mexican American students; additionally, these children were assessed by their teachers in the area of self-esteem. Using 3 statistical methods on data obtained, it was determined, for example, that (1) differences between the ethnic categories in self-esteem and academic performance, inconsistent at grade 3, favored the non-Mexican Americans at grade 6 and (2) a consistently lower correlation was found for Mexican Americans at both grades between "How I See Myself" and "How My Teacher Sees Me" than was found for non-Mexican Americans. Ten tables (containing means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and inter-rater reliabilities), 16 references, and the test instrument "How I See Myself" are appended. (BO)

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Children's Perceptions of Themselves and Their Teacher's Feelings Toward Them Related to Actual Teacher Perceptions and School Achievement

by

Dr. Richard A. Gustafson
and
Dr. Thomas Owens
of
The Center for Planning and Evaluation
San Jose, California

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Background and Purposes of the Study

Since 1950 there has been an increasing number of empirical studies related to self-concept, and since 1960 many of these have centered upon the relationship of ethnic group membership to self-esteem. Wylie (1961) considered the seemingly endless array of hypotheses, instruments and experimental designs related to the assessment of self-concept.

Most studies of self-concept have used single instruments in which the students themselves have responded. However, some studies have attempted to obtain independent views of self-concept using teacher or parent ratings.

Davidson and Lang (1960) and Brookover and Thomas (1963) found a significant relationship between students' self-concepts and the perceived evaluation of their teachers. Results of studies relating students' self-concepts to actual teacher evaluations are not as consistent. Coopersmith (1959) reported substantial agreement between the results of his Self- Esteem Inventory and his Behavior Rating Form. His data was incomplete, however, and it appears that there was substantial disagreement as well.

Butts (1963), Burke (1968), Williams (1968) and Soares and Soares (1970) found significant differences between self and observer evaluations using various instruments to measure the self-concept of disadvantaged students. Moses and Zirkel (1970) found that self-concept was related to ethnic group membership.

Greene and Zirkel (1971) and Alberti (1970) found teacher ratings of self-concept significantly correlated with the child's view of self.

The purposes of this study were (1) to explore inter-rater agreement of children's perceptions of themselves and their teacher's feelings toward them related to actual teacher perceptions and school achievement, and (2) to document the relationships between the child's view of self, teacher rating of self-concept, achievement, and ethnic group membership.

Procedures

Data were obtained on 552 students in grades 3 and 6 attending five urban California schools having more than a 50% Mexican-American student population. These grade levels were chosen to obtain data on the variables of interest at two stages of the child's social and cognitive development.

Third grade children were given Coopersmith's (1967) Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI). The SEI has 54 items consisting of statements to which the student responds either "Like Me" or "Unlike Me." In addition, each child was administered by the research staff a locally developed 18-item adjective checklist entitled "How I See Myself." This instrument was a modified version of a scale used by Davidson and Lang (1960) and is shown in the appendix to this paper.

The identical adjective checklist was given by the researchers a second time to students with new directions and the focus changed to "How My Teacher Sees Me." Finally, third and sixth grade teachers were asked to complete the same checklist showing their view of the child's self-concept. This was completed without the teachers having seen the student completed instruments.

Cooperative Primary Tests in Mathematics (Form 23A) and Reading (Form 23A) were administered to obtain measures of academic performance.

Self-concept data on sixth grade students were obtained using the same instruments as in grade three. Achievement in mathematics and reading was assessed using the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) Level II, Form Q. In addition, California Test of Mental Maturity (CTMM) and Lorge-Thorndike scores of scholastic aptitude were available for these children.

Data Analysis

The primary interest was to view mean differences as a function of ethnic group membership. Many hypotheses had been offered by educators and community members concerned about the perceived low self-esteem of Mexican-American children and its presumed effect upon school performance. Therefore, differences between the various measures of self-esteem, achievement and scholastic aptitude were examined as a function of ethnic group membership.

Two major ethnic groups, Mexican-Americans and Anglos, constituted more than 95% of the study sample. For this reason the data were dichotomized into Mexican-American and non-Mexican-American categories with the understanding that a small number of Blacks, Oreintals, and Philippinos is included in the latter category.

The degree of agreement between the four measures of self-esteem at grades three and six by ethnic group was examined. Three statistical methods were employed to measure this. First, mean differences between a child's view of himself, how he perceived his teacher's view of him, and the actual teacher rating of self-concept were examined. Secondly, the intercorrelations between these same views were generated. Finally, analysis of variance techniques, (Winer, 1962, p. 124-132) were used to obtain reliabilities between the three views of self-concept. Each view was considered a "judgment" and inter-judge reliabilities were calculated.

RESULTS

Third Grade

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations by ethnic group for the six measures used at the third grade. No significant differences exist either between ethnic groups or between mean ratings of self-concept measures. No difference as observed on the Reading Achievement Test, but non-Mexican-Americans scored significantly higher ($t=2.20$) on the math test.

Tables 2 and 3 are the correlation matrices for the six measures by ethnic group.

The intercorrelations between the four measures of self-concept are quite similar for both ethnic groups. All relationships are significant although there is more agreement among the three self-concept measures the children completed (SEI, How I See Myself, How My Teacher Sees Me) themselves than with the Teacher Completed Checklist. The relationship between the SEI and the Teacher Checklist with achievement seems to be most stable. This relationship is more positive for non-Mexican-Americans. There is also a stronger relationship between "How I See Myself" and "How My Teacher Sees Me" in the non-Mexican-American group.

Sixth Grade

Table 4 cites the means and standard deviations by ethnic group for the eight measures used at the sixth grade. Here there are strking differences only hinted at in the lower grade levels. Significant differences between the ethnic groups exist on the SEI (t=2.27) CTBS Reading (t=1.67), CTBS Math (t=2.30) and the Lorge-Thorndike (t=2.07). All these differences favor the non-Mexican-Americans.

The CTMM score was obtained when these children were in grade four, which may explain why no difference was noted there. The various views of self-esteem using the adjective checklist indicate no differences.

The intercorrelation matrices in Tables 5 and 6 indicate essentially the same pattern of relationships observed at grade three. There are moderate positive relationships between the four measures of self-esteem with generally higher ratings for the non-Mexican-Americans. The SEI and the teacher checklist are significantly related to achievement and scholastic aptitude with this relationship being more positive for non-Mexican-Americans. The correlation between achievement and scholastic aptitude is highly significant for both ethnic groups.

Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10 summarize the interjudge reliabilities of the possible combinations using the adjuective checklist instrument at grades three and six for the two ethnic groups. The highest agreement occurred between "How I See Myself" and "How My Teacher Sees Me" (Table 9). The three "judge" pool expressing the inter-reliability using all three instruments also had fairly high (.56) reliability.

The agreement between "How I See Myself" and the "Teacher Completed Checklist" as well as between "How My Teacher Sees Me" and the "Teacher Completed Checklist" was quite low as indicated in Tables 9 and 10.

Summary and Discussion

Instruments measuring self-concept and cognitive ability were administered to third and sixth grade students in urban schools having high concentrations of Mexican-American children. Teachers of these children were also asked to assess their perception of each child's self-esteem.

Agreement between the three views of self-concept (How I See Myself, How My Teacher Sees Me, and the Teacher Completed Checklist) was examined by looking for mean differences, intercorrelations, and interjudge reliabilities. Examination of the means revealed no differences. The intercorrelations and reliabilities were moderately high. On these three instruments there were no ethnic group differences at either the third and sixth grade level.

Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventroy showed no differences at the third grade, but non-Mexican-Americans had significantly higher scores at the sixth grade.

At all grade levels the non-Mexican-American children scored significantly higher in achievement and scholastic aptitude measures. Yet members of both categories were performing below expectations in mathematics and reading.

Moderate positive relationships were found between the SEI and the Teacher Checklist and student achievement in both ethnic categories.

While this study was concentrated in the elementary grades, it appears that the trend of differences becoming cumulative has been established. Differences between the ethnic categories in self-esteem and academic performance, inconsistent at the third grade level, become quite dominant at the sixth grade. Future plans include obtaining data from ninth grade students in the same neighborhood to further document these hypothesized trends.

It is interesting to note that data from the three forms of the self-concept instrument based upon Davidson and Lang's (1960) adjective checklist do not demonstrate any differences either between "judges" or between ethnic categories. Slight differences of a few points did crop up but none of these differences were significant. It is the intent of the authors to design reliability and validity studies to better document the utility of the adjective checklist method of assessing self-esteem.

A consistently higher correlation was found at both the third and sixth grade level between "How I See Myself and "How My Teacher Sees Me" for non-Mexican-American children than for Mexican-American children. This suggests that the Mexican-American child feels more independent of the teacher in considering his own worth than does the non-Mexican-American.

Further analysis of this data will examine any student sex differences in self-esteem on any of these measures and will also determine if the small Black and Oriental population contained in this study are significantly different from the Anglos. If they prove to be significantly lower in self-concept they may cause an under-estimate of the differences between Mexican-American and Anglo students used in this study. Test-retest reliability of the self-esteem instruments used is also being conducted.

TABLE 1

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ON MEASURES OF SELF-ESTEEM AND ACHIEVEMENT FOR THIRD GRADE MEXICAN-AMERICANS AND NON-MEXICAN-AMERICANS

	N=200 Mexican-American		N=101 Non-Mexican-American	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI)	60.53	10.72	60.23	13.68
How I See Myself	44.99	5.49	44.64	4.91
How My Teacher Sees Me	44.78	6.46	44.10	5.82
Teacher Completed Checklist	44.42	6.18	43.20	8.21
COOP Reading Form 23B	24.86 (1.9)*	8.27	25.27 (2.1)*	8.12
COOP Math Form 23B	31.48 (2.2)*	5.97	33.24 (2.3)*	6.47

* Grade equivalent score

TABLE 2

INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEASURES OF SELF-ESTEEM AND ACHIEVEMENT IN READING AND MATHEMATICS FOR THIRD GRADE MEXICAN-AMERICANS

	SEI	See Myself	Teacher Sees Me	Teacher Checklist	Reading	Mathematics
SEI	1.00	.33	.22	.16	.17	.21
See Myself		1.00	.44	.27	-.05	.02
Teacher Sees Me			1.00	.26	.10	.21
Teacher Checklist				1.00	.19	.00
Reading					1.00	.35
Mathematics						1.00

Significant at .05 level if r ≥ .14

TABLE 3

INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEASURES OF SELF-ESTEEM AND ACHIEVEMENT IN READING AND MATHEMATICS FOR THIRD GRADE NON-MEXICAN-AMERICANS

	SEI	See Myself	Teacher Sees Me	Teacher Checklist	Reading	Mathematics
SEI	1.00	.43	.32	.28	.37	.29
See Myself		1.00	.64	.22	.22	.20
Teacher Sees Me			1.00	.25	.07	.25
Teacher Checklist				1.00	.33	.23
Reading					1.00	.42
Mathematics						1.00

Significant at .05 level if $r \geq .20$

TABLE 4

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ON MEASURES OF SELF-ESTEEM, ACADEMIC APTITUDE, AND ACHIEVEMENT FOR SIXTH GRADE MEXICAN-AMERICAN AND NON-MEXICAN-AMERICANS

	N=181 Mexican-American		N=70 Non-Mexican-American	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
SEI	61.10	13.24	65.90	15.61
How I See Myself	43.40	4.81	43.51	4.43
How My Teacher Sees Me	42.23	5.67	43.10	5.75
Teacher Completed Checklist	42.01	5.70	42.21	6.47
CTBS Level II Reading Total	54.22 (4.4)*	17.38	49.83 (4.8)*	20.43
CTBS Level II Mathematics Total	55.41 (4.6)*	17.81	61.72 (5.0)*	20.08
CTMM	99.36	15.78	101.44	12.15
Lorge-Thorndike Non Verbal	90.44	14.49	95.93	20.18

* Grade Equivalent Score

TABLE 5

INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEASURES OF SELF-ESTEEM, SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE AND ACHIEVEMENT FOR SIXTH GRADE MEXICAN-AMERICANS

	SEI	See Myself	Teacher Sees Me	Teacher Checklist	CTBS Reading	CTBS Math	CTMM	Lorge Thorndike
SEI	1.00	.33	.36	.16	.33	.33	.20	.27
How I See Myself		1.00	.52	.25	.18	.22	.04	.16
Teacher Sees Me			1.00	.22	.14	.25	.14	.13
Teacher Checklist				1.00	.25	.27	.35	.13
CTBS Reading					1.00	.68	.59	.61
CTBS Math						1.00	.61	.68
CTMM							1.00	.60
Lorge Thorndike								1.00

Significant at .05 level if $r \geq .15$

TABLE 6

INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEASURES OF SELF-ESTEEM, SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE AND ACHIEVEMENT FOR SIXTH GRADE NON-MEXICAN-AMERICANS

	SEI	See Myself	Teacher Sees Me	Teacher Checklist	CTBS Reading	CTBS Math	CTMM	Lorge Thorndike
SEI	1.00	.36	.49	.20	.47	.40	.25	.34
How I See Myself		1.00	.67	.19	.17	.20	.08	.11
Teacher Sees Me			1.00	.20	.30	.30	.18	.20
Teacher Checklist				1.00	.52	.48	.41	.44
CTBS Reading					1.00	.84	.63	.66
CTBS Math						1.00	.66	.75
CTMM							1.00	.62
Lorge Thorndike								1.00

Significant at .05 level if $r \geq .24$

TABLE 7

INTER-RATER RELIABILITIES BETWEEN THE THREE VIEWS OF SELF-CONCEPT: HOW I SEE MYSELF, HOW MY TEACHER SEES ME: TEACHER CHECKLIST

Third Grade Mexican-American	.58
Third Grade Non-Mexican American	.57
Sixth Grade Mexican-American	.60
Sixth Grade Non-Mexican-American	.50

TABLE 8

INTER-RATER RELIABILITIES BETWEEN HOW I SEE MYSELF AND HOW MY TEACHER SEES ME

Third Grade Mexican-American	.60
Third Grade Non-Mexican-American	.77
Sixth Grade Mexican-American	.67
Sixth Grade Non-Mexican-American	.72

TABLE 9

INTER-RATER RELIABILITIES BETWEEN HOW I SEE MYSELF AND TEACHER COMPLETED CHECKLIST

Third Grade Mexican-American	.42
Third Grade Non-Mexican-American	.31
Sixth Grade Mexican-American	.43
Sixth Grade Non-Mexican-American	.14

TABLE 10

INTER-RATER RELIABILITIES BETWEEN HOW MY TEACHER SEES ME AND TEACHER COMPLETED CHECKLIST

Third Grade Mexican-American	.41
Third Grade Non-Mexican-American	.38
Sixth Grade Mexican-American	.37
Sixth Grade Non-Mexican-American	.30

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HOW I SEE MYSELF

Student's name_____ School_____
(First) (Last)

Grade level_____

Sex:
boy_____ (check one)
girl_____

Teacher's name_____

	1	2	3	
Selfish				Not Selfish
Good				Bad
Sad				Happy
Slow				Fast
Clean				Dirty
Strong				Weak
Cowardly				Brave
Honest				Not Honest
Slow Learner				Fast Learner

	1	2	3	
Calm				Nervous
Not Fair				Fair
Kind				Mean
Not Friendly				Friendly
Wise				Foolish
Polite				Rude
Lazy				Alert
Nice				Awful
Not Careful				Careful